



2024-27

# STRATEGIC PLAN



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters that surround the Murray River. We acknowledge and respect their history, culture and continuous connection to country.

We pay our respects to elders, past, present and emerging who have cared for this country for over 60,000 years.

This landscape, rich in story and opportunity, plays a pivotal part in our visitor economy and we thank the First Peoples of Victoria and New South Wales for sharing this with us all.





# FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

As the Chair of Murray Regional Tourism I am proud to present our Strategic Plan for 2024-2027. This document is a testament to our shared commitment to resilience, innovation, and excellence, inherent in our cross-border collaboration and vision.

Our strategy is designed to propel the Murray region into the forefront of Australia's inland destinations. It is deeply informed by the unique beauty of our landscapes, the richness of our shared histories and the dynamic resilience of our tourism industry.

This plan is a product of our collective aspiration for a future where the Murray region shines as a paragon of its tourism excellence and sustainability. It is aligned seamlessly with the Victorian Government's *Experience Victoria 2033* plan, the New South Wales Government's *Visitor Economy Strategy 2030*, and Murray region's *Destination Management Plan 2023-2027*. This alignment underscores our dedication to driving sustainable growth, enhancing visitor experiences, and fostering community benefits across the Murray region.

The key targets over the next three years are to attract 8.17 million visitors, to generate \$3 billion in visitor expenditure and, importantly, for tourism to support 6,920 jobs generated by visitation to the Murray region.

The strategic vision is ambitious and considered, designed to harness the collective strength of our cross-border river communities. Central to our vision is the recognition of the Murray as a singular destination that transcends state lines blending the best of both states into one cohesive journey.

As we move forward with the implementation of this strategic plan, we do so as a united front, embracing the opportunities that lie ahead in the visitor economy with optimism and determination. Together, we will navigate the challenges, seize the opportunities, and celebrate our achievements, ensuring a prosperous, vibrant and sustainable future for tourism across the Murray region.

I extend my deepest thanks to everyone involved for your unwavering support and commitment to our shared vision.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Wendy Greiner'.

**Wendy Greiner**  
Chair,  
Murray Regional Tourism  
May 2024







# ABOUT MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM

Murray Regional Tourism is the peak cross-border tourism organisation that advocates for, promotes, and advances tourism and the visitor economy along the Murray in both Victoria and New South Wales. Our decisions shape this region's tourism sector, empowering it to progress and thrive.

We are part of a highly cooperative federal, state and local government tourism ecosystem that works proactively to support a robust and sustainable regional tourism sector.

## OUR VISION

The Murray region, Australia's iconic inland tourism destination.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to lead, grow, promote, and sustain visitation, tourism development, and tourism investment across the Murray region.

## OUR VALUES

We champion the following core values that drive our operational ethos and decision-making:

- Strategic thinking
- Leadership
- Future focused
- Decisiveness
- Integrity and respect
- Collaboration

## OUR BELIEFS

1. **We believe that the Murray region**, with its iconic river and waterways, extensive natural environment, inspiring holiday locations, and wealth of experiences for visitors of all ages, is Australia's most exciting inland tourism destination.
2. **We believe that tourism is vital to the economic prosperity of the Murray region** and the best way to maintain and grow this is with a vibrant and progressive sector that not only meets, but surpasses, visitor expectations.
3. **We believe that the interests of our stakeholders**, the Victorian and New South Wales Governments, local governments, tourism operators, and tourism stakeholders are best served by a progressive regional tourism organisation that has extensive knowledge of the Murray region and a deep understanding of the region's current and potential visitor economy.

## OUR TOURISM REGION AND ECOSYSTEM

Our region, and our structure as a peak regional tourism body, is unique as it is the only such body whose jurisdiction crosses two state borders – Victoria and New South Wales – and incorporates 13 local governments.

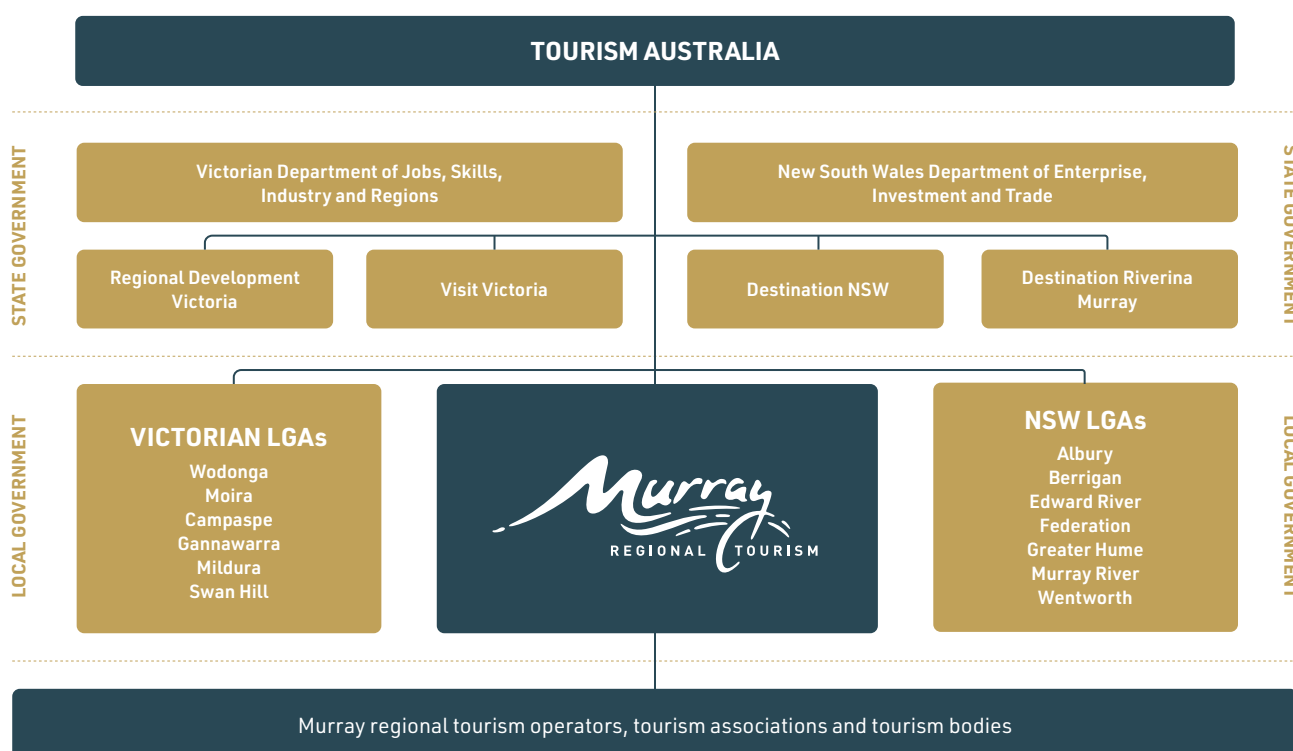
Our region is just over 82,000 square kilometres in size, extending almost the entire length of the Murray River from the South Australian border to just east of Albury.

With its iconic river and waterways, extensive natural environment and inspiring holiday locations, our region offers a wealth of experiences for visitors of all ages.

As the Murray region's peak tourism body, Murray Regional Tourism operates in a highly cooperative tourism ecosystem that works proactively together to advocate for, and influence a robust and sustainable regional tourism sector.

Murray Regional Tourism is funded by the Victorian State Government, New South Wales State Government via Destination Riverina Murray and by the 13 local governments that are located along the Murray.

### The Murray Tourism Ecosystem



### Murray Regional Tourism Geographical Area





# MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM'S 2024-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Murray Regional Tourism's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan forms the roadmap for how we will guide the evolution and sustainability of the tourism sector across the Murray region. This strategy supports the roll-out of other key Murray regional destination plans namely: Murray Regional Tourism's Destination Management Plan 2023-2027, and aligned Local Area Plans.

It also leverages state-led tourism strategies including the Victorian Government's *Experience Victoria 2033*

and the New South Wales Government's *Visitor Economy Strategy 2030* and takes into consideration the tourism goals of our 13 local government funding partners.

The following diagram shows how *Murray Regional Tourism's Strategic Plan 2024-2027* connects, leverages and supports the important strategies and aspirations of our stakeholders within our context.

## MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2027

Guides the evolution and sustainability of the tourism sector

Responds to our challenges and takes advantage of the opportunities

## LEVERAGES

Victorian Government's *Experience Victoria 2033* plan  
New South Wales Government's *Visitor Economy Strategy 2030*  
Destination Riverina Murray's *Destination Management Plan*  
Murray Regional Tourism's 13 local government funding partners' tourism goals  
Murray Regional Tourism's *Destination Management Plan*  
10 Local Area Plans by MRT/ DRM

Forms the blueprint for

**MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM'S ANNUAL OPERATIONS PLAN**



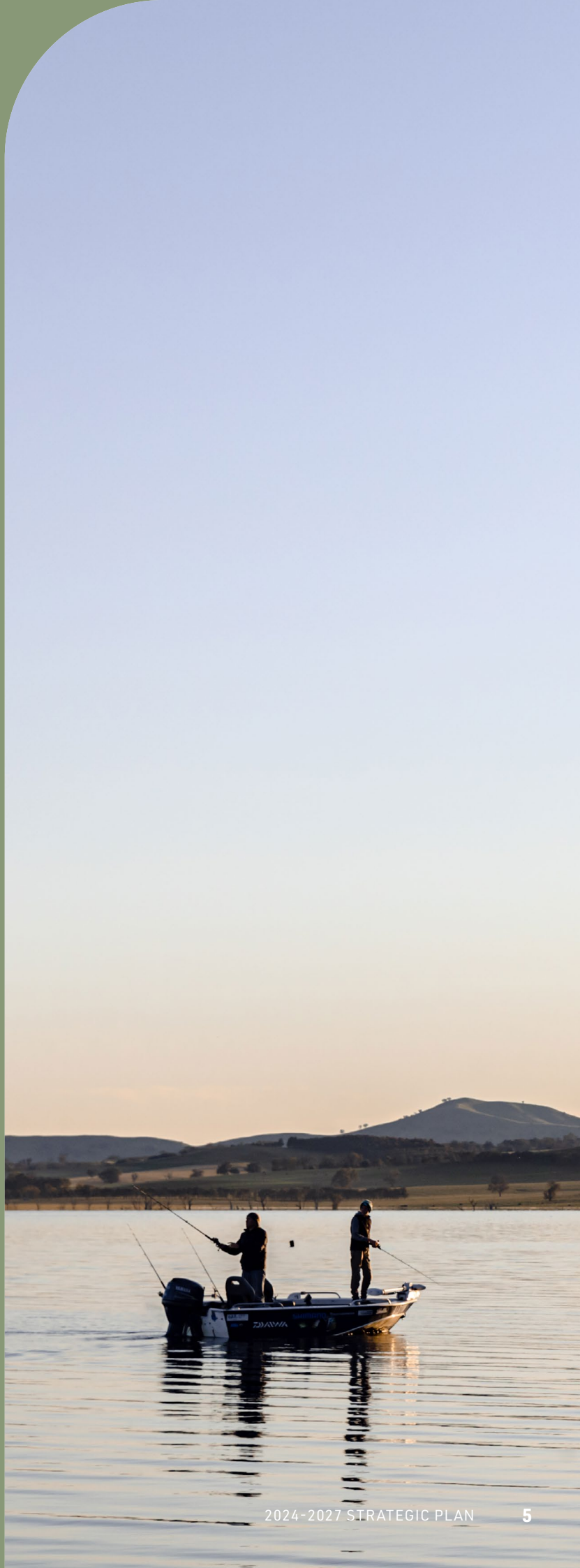
## HOW WE ARE RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The targets, goals, and deliverables that we have set for 2024-2027 are shaped by Murray Regional Tourism's comprehensive understanding of the region and what we, as the peak cross-border tourism body, can do to lead the Murray region towards a prosperous and dynamic future in tourism.

Murray Regional Tourism will meet the challenges by working closely with our local government partners place based priorities, driving positive operational and strategic outcomes to deliver our goals. We will also support our partners to navigate the tourism ecosystem to support local government partners to deliver localised results.

Including:

- Addressing the evolving needs of a shifting domestic market.
- Capitalising on the increasing preference for nature-based and sustainable tourism.
- Harnessing the potential of culturally and linguistically diverse markets to align with demographic growth.
- Executing plans for timely response and recovery from natural and man-made emergencies and disasters.
- Elevating the quantity and quality of accommodation to meet the rising expectations of visitors.
- Expanding and improving air travel connections to our region.
- Fostering the development and promotion of First Nations' tourism products.
- Implementing strategic initiatives to attract and retain a skilled tourism workforce.
- Demonstrating continuous value to partners and stakeholders, reinforcing the region's collaborative and interconnected tourism ecosystem.
- Readyng our tourism operators to respond to rapidly changing shifts in consumer preferences.







# 2024-2027 STRATEGIC TARGETS

## BY 2027 WE WILL:

- 1** Exceed Tourism Research Australia's 2027 forecasts<sup>1</sup> by 10% resulting in Murray Regional Tourism:
  - a** Attracting 8.17m visitors to the Murray region (TRA forecast: 7.43m).
  - b** Generating \$3bn in direct visitor expenditure across the Murray region (TRA forecast: \$2.75bn).
- 2** Grow the visitor economy tourism workforce by 10% to 6,920.<sup>2</sup>
- 3** Support the development of at least one new quality tourist attraction, or tourism-related product, in each of the western, central and eastern Murray regions as identified in Murray Regional Tourism's Destination Management Plan 2023-2027.
- 4** Cement our reputation as the leading tourism body in the Murray region as tested by stakeholder research.
- 5** Be recognised as a leader in regional tourism marketing and promotion by achieving a 20% growth in the number of target visitors we regularly engage with across our channels.

1. Murray Region Visitation and Expenditure Projections, Tourism Research Australia, June 2023

2. 2021 ABS Census Employment data sourced from Remplan



# WHAT WE COMMIT TO DELIVERING

## GOAL 1

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### We will contribute to community economic prosperity by growing visitation and visitor spend across the Murray region

We will exceed expectations by being bold and innovative in our approach to driving visitation growth that results in increased tourism spend, investment, and jobs. As a powerful voice in leading the region's tourism sector we will unlock greater funding to channel into Murray Regional Tourism development and promotion.

#### TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL:

- 1 Collaborate with, and continually seek feedback from, all local and state government funding partners so that together, we can realise our shared commitments for advancing tourism across the Murray region.  
  
This will include Murray Regional Tourism:
  - a Creating mutually aligned, comprehensive annual operational plans throughout this strategic period.
  - b Working together to:
    - i Guide the delivery of the Murray region's *Destination Management Plan 2023-2027* and aligned Local Area Plans, as the blueprints to identify, and generate investment in, new tourism experiences.
    - ii Complete the concept design of Stages 2 and 3 of the Murray River Adventure Trail with Murray Regional Tourism taking the lead to bid for funding to realise next stage trail delivery.
  - c Building strong relationships with key local government personnel and keeping them informed of critical state and federal government announcements and quarterly tourism data to facilitate regional planning and tourism evolution.
  - d Executing the regional crisis management plan to respond to acute natural or man-made disruption to the tourism sector.
- 2 Represent the interests of the Murray regional tourism sector at a state and federal government level, to influence decisions that will boost tourism evolution, spend, visitation and jobs.  
  
This will include Murray Regional Tourism:
  - a Leveraging state-led tourism strategies by reflecting identified pillars and directions specific to the Murray region, including:
    - i The Victorian Government's *Experience Victoria 2033* plan.
    - ii The New South Wales Government's *Visitor Economy Strategy 2030*.
  - b Promoting the region to domestic and international wholesalers and buyers of tourism product.
- 3 Advocate for increased funding and support aligned to in-scope Murray Regional Tourism planning.
- 4 Promote the benefit of tourism and its contribution to regional economic prosperity to Murray regional communities.





## GOAL 2

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### We will strengthen visitation appeal and strengthen our regional brand equity

We will reinforce equity in the Murray regional brand through compelling marketing plans and programs that champion our prominent destinations and local areas to generate increased visitation of domestic, international and business tourism.

#### TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL:

- 1** Drive demand by increasing public awareness of the Murray region as an exciting and inspiring tourism destination. This will include:
  - a** Creating and delivering promotions that not only strengthen the appeal of the Murray Region as a destination in its own right, but that also align with Victorian and New South Wales government overarching tourism campaigns.
  - b** Delivering motivational marketing campaigns that engage with, and convert, new and wider audiences.
  - c** Championing the use of the Visit the Murray branding across all Murray regional tourism marketing delivered by LGAs, tourism associations, tourism bodies and tourism operators.
  - d** Continuously seeking alignment with the overarching Visit Victoria and Destination NSW master brands and where appropriate, South Australian tourism branding.
  - e** Motivating LGA and industry participation in cross regional promotional efforts.
  - f** Providing the go-to channels and platforms to promote the Murray region as a must-visit destination.
  - g** Linking existing experiences throughout the Murray region to create enticing visitor touring experiences, such as the Murray River Road concept
- 2** Continue to work with First Nations' People to identify, develop and promote market-ready tourism product.
- 3** Promote nature-based and food and wine experiences across the Murray region either under Murray Regional Tourism campaigns or in cooperative marketing campaigns.



## GOAL 3

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### We will champion our operators

**We will engage with local tourism operators and invest in programs that they can access to enhance the competitiveness of their businesses and subsequently, that of the Murray region.**

#### TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL:

- 1** Expand the pool of regional tourism operators, tourism associations and tourism bodies, that Murray Regional Tourism engages with.
- 2** Work with local governments to provide access to relevant professional and sector development that will enable tourism operators to boost their skills, improve service to visitors and to grow their operations.
- 3** Provide access to marketing opportunities that will enable tourism operators to increase their exposure to the potential visitor pool.
- 4** Encourage participation in local, regional, and state tourism and business awards and accreditation programs.
- 5** Provide the channels and platforms for the promotion of Murray regional tourism product and experiences, and investigate new channels to market.

## GOAL 4

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### We will be efficient and innovative

**We will have the necessary resources and capabilities needed to meet our goals. We will constantly challenge how we operate to ensure that we remain relevant and at the forefront of tourism evolution.**

#### TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL:

- 1** Ensure our financial sustainability to guide, align, and enable delivery of Murray Regional Tourism's strategic plan.
- 2** Ensure Murray Regional Tourism's management of its governance processes aligns with legislative and corporate best practice.
- 3** Attract and retain board members and staff who have the depth of experience needed to deliver Murray Regional Tourism's strategies, plans and aligned key performance indicators.
- 4** Use alignment to Murray Regional Tourism's Strategic Plan 2024-2027 to assess requests for out-of-scope projects.
- 5** Review strategy delivery annually to ensure that we are on track with delivery and use this as the basis for the development and delivery of comprehensive annual plans.
- 6** Introduce new and innovative ways to diversify revenue streams to lessen reliance on partner funding and grants and as a channel to expand our activities and outputs.
- 7** Better understand emerging demographic, technological, economic, societal, government and legislative changes that have the potential to impact regional visitation. We will work with our local government, state government, and industry partners to meet and challenge these disruptions.
- 8** Be cognisant of the environmental impact of tourism across the Murray region, where possible, and work with our local government, state government and industry partners to identify ways to reduce that impact.





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